

See mesmerising Pluto in colour now

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Washington: The US space agency NASA has released enhanced colour mosaics of Pluto that combines some of the sharpest views of the mysterious landscape.

The pictures are part of a sequence taken near New Horizons'™ closest approach to Pluto during its July 14 flyby.

It has resolutions of about 250-280 feet per pixel - revealing features smaller than half a city block on Pluto's™ surface.

Lower resolution colour data (at about 2,066 feet per pixel) were added to create this new image.

The images form a strip 80 km wide, trending from the edge of 'badlands'• northwest of the informally named Sputnik Planum, across the al-Idrisi mountains, onto the shoreline of Pluto's™ 'heart'• feature and just into its icy plains.

The wide variety of cratered, mountainous and glacial terrains gives scientists and the public alike a breathtaking, super-high-resolution colour window into Pluto's™ geology.

New sharp images of Pluto have revealed a bewildering variety of surface features that have scientists reeling because of their range and complexity.

The images reveal new features as diverse as possible dunes, nitrogen ice flows that apparently oozed out of mountainous regions onto plains, and even networks of valleys that may have been carved by material flowing over Pluto's™ surface.

'Pluto is showing us a diversity of landforms and complexity of processes that rival anything we have seen in the solar system,'• said New Horizons principal investigator Alan Stern from Southwest Research Institute (SwRI), Boulder, Colorado.

New Horizons has begun its year-long download of new images and other data.

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